

Comment on PRM 10786

September 6, 2003

Gentlemen,

I am an Extra Class Amateur Operator and I have been licensed for nearly twenty years. I have actively participated in contests using Morse code (CW) and I also have taught Morse code to many people so that they may obtain or upgrade their license class. I am also an active Volunteer Examiner and administer Morse code proficiency examinations. However, for many years I have believed that the use of Morse code as a requirement to obtain an Amateur Radio Operators license is not a fair or accurate measure of ones ability neither to provide communication nor to test their technical skills. CW is just one of the many modes of communication that Amateurs use and should not be singled out to have one demonstrate any special ability to use it. The argument that when all else fails it is CW that gets through does not have any validity when there are modes such as FEC AMTOR or PSK that will pull a weak digital signal out of what would seem useless noise. There are many digital communication modes now in use, some developed and pioneered by Amateurs, and they do not get any special treatment in the testing and licensing procedure. While I support anyone's desire to use Morse code, I, as well as the World Radio Council, believe that it should not be a requirement for HF radio operating privileges. The WRC voted this past session to abolish this requirement for HF operating and has allowed sovereign entities the right to allow or disallow the Morse code requirement. As a progressive nation I believe that the United States should do as many other modern countries have done already and eliminate this archaic method of testing ones skill to communicate via radio. Just as driving a car, the option to drive a stick shift is there but it is not a requirement to get a drivers license. Any other group that endorses a single mode of communication, such as CW, AM or RTTY, should not impose their affection for their particular type of communications and make it a requirement for licensing.

The Amateur Radio Service is here to provide a pool of trained communicators to be ready in times of emergency and is not an outlet for those that wish to romanticize a particular mode of operation and wax nostalgic of days gone by. The requirement of testing ones hearing skills is not a filter to provide good operators but a barrier that keeps out very technically skilled people that have a lot to offer the service. The Amateur Radio Service needs to attract these people if we are to continue grow the number of operators and to advance our

methods of communication. We must do everything possible to "get the message through".

In addition to eliminating the Morse code requirement a restructuring of the band allocations would be in order so that the bandwidth could be used proportionally to the activity of the modes in use. The Voice bands would obviously require more of a sub-band since most communication, either routine or emergency, is done with the human voice. The growing popularity and efficiency of digital modes would warrant the second portion of a sub-band, and CW, while most activity is already in the bottom 25 KHz of the sub-band, would require the least amount of bandwidth. I thank you for the time to read this comment and hope that you will act on the petition quickly.

Sincerely,

Norman Fusaro, W3IZ